

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims by replacing them with the following complete listing:

Claims 1-7. (*Canceled*)

Claim 8. (*Currently Amended*) A cross-country ski system comprising:

a cross country ski comprising a central zone adapted to receive a device for binding a boot to the ski;

the central zone of the ski comprising a binding zone having a location for receiving the binding device and an upper support surface of the ski;

the upper support surface of the ski being arranged on [[a]] at least one of two lateral sides of the location to receive the binding device, the upper support surface being capable of coming in direct contact with the boot when a skier using the cross-country ski system exerts a pressure force;

the location for receiving the binding device ~~comprises~~ comprising an upwardly facing recess of the upper surface of the ski.

Claim 9. (*Currently Amended*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:

in the central zone of the ski, at least one lateral shoulder ~~is~~ arranged on one of the two lateral sides of the location for receiving the binding device such that the boot can be supported directly on the shoulder.

Claim 10. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:

the ski comprises two lateral upper surfaces arranged on respective lateral sides of the location for receiving the binding device.

Claim 11. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 9, wherein:  
the shoulder comprises a support surface for the boot arranged above the upper surface of the location for receiving the binding device.

Claim 12. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:  
the upper support surface of the ski is longitudinally arranged in an area corresponding to a metatarsophalangeal bending zone of the user's foot.

Claim 13. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, further comprising:  
a binding device adapted to be fixed on the ski in the location for receiving the binding device.

Claim 14. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:  
the binding device has, at least in the area of the support surface, a lesser width than a width of the ski.

Claim 15. (*Currently Amended*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:  
the binding device is adapted to be fitted within the recess of the upper surface of the ski;  
the binding device has a rib adapted to be positioned within a downwardly facing longitudinal recess in a sole of the boot;  
the binding device ~~includes~~ ~~including~~ no baseplate to be mounted upon the ski, so that a lower external surface of the boot is adapted to be directly supported on the upper support surface of the ski.

Claim 16. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:

the ski has, at least in part of the central zone, an upper surface, the transverse width of said upper surface being greater than a width of the lower gliding surface of the ski.

Claim 17. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:

the binding device includes a front jaw adapted to engage a front bar of the boot for enabling articulation of the boot with respect to the ski;

the binding device includes an elastic return mechanism, said elastic return mechanism being rearwardly spaced from the front jaw and being adapted to engage a rear bar of the boot for applying an elastic return force to the rear bar.

Claim 18. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:

the binding device is adapted to be affixed to the ski by being positioned within the recess of the upper surface of the ski;

the binding device has a rib adapted to be positioned within a downwardly facing longitudinal recess in a sole of the boot;

the binding device includes no baseplate that would prevent a lower external surface of the boot from direct supporting engagement on the upper support surface of the ski.

Claim 19. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 15, further comprising:

a boot having a support surface adapted to be supported directly by said upper support surface of the ski.

Claim 20. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 19, wherein:

said support surface of the boot is in a metatarsophalangeal bending zone of the boot.

Claim 21. *(New)* A cross-country ski system comprising:

a cross country ski having a longitudinally extending binding zone spaced from front and rear ends of the ski, said binding zone comprising:

a pair of transversely spaced apart longitudinally extending upper support surfaces adapted to support directly support surfaces of a sole of a boot at least in a metatarsophalangeal bending zone of the boot;

an upwardly open longitudinally extending recess positioned between said pair of upper support surfaces;

a binding device adapted to be fixed upon the ski in the recess of the binding zone, the binding device having an upwardly projecting rib adapted to be positioned within a downwardly facing longitudinally groove in the sole of the boot;

at least in the binding zone, the ski has an upper surface width greater than a width of the binding device.

Claim 22. *(New)* A cross-country ski system according to claim 21, wherein:

the binding device includes no baseplate that would prevent a lower external surface of the boot from direct supporting engagement on the upper support surfaces of the ski.

Claim 23. *(New)* A cross-country ski system according to claim 21, wherein:

the binding device includes a front jaw adapted to engage a front bar of the boot for enabling articulation of the boot with respect to the ski;

the binding device includes an elastic return mechanism, said elastic return mechanism being rearwardly spaced from the front jaw and being adapted to engage a rear bar of the boot for applying an elastic return force to the rear bar.

Claim 24. *(New)* A cross-country ski system according to claim 23, further comprising:

a boot having support surfaces adapted to be supported directly by said upper support surfaces of the ski, said boot having said front and rear bars.